

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
May 3, 2005 - 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Hundt at 7:10 p.m.

Salute to the Flag was conducted.

Emergency Exits were pointed out by the Supervisor.

Roll Call:

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Councilman Devine | Present |
| Councilman Russell | Present |
| Councilwoman Doyle | Present |
| Councilman Carroll | Present |
| Supervisor Hundt | Present |

GOALS OF MEETING

Supervisor Hundt outlined the goals of this meeting:

- 1 Appoint members to the Recreation Commission;
- 2 Discuss duties of Recreation Commission and Recreation Director;
- 3 Establish chain of command;
- 4 Discuss John Ryan proposal.

She then asked everyone to put past mistakes behind us and keep this meeting friendly. This is about the kids and the seniors who need recreation services in the town.

RECREATION COMMISSION TERMS OF OFFICE AND APPOINTMENTS

After some discussion about the procedure to assign terms of office to a 7-member body so that every year one member's term will expire, Supervisor Hundt moved to appoint the list proposed by Peter Clair:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------|
| Tom Werner | - | 1 year term |
| Peter Clair | - | 2 year term |
| Linda Gregory | - | 3 year term |
| Frankie O'Connell | - | 4 year term |
| Orpha Thomas | - | 5 year term |
| Charlene Pollinger | - | 6 year term |
| Mike Murnane | - | 7 year term |

APPOINT MEMBERS TO RECREATION COMMISSION

MOTION: S/Hundt

SECOND: C/Devine

| | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| ROLL CALL: | C/Carroll | - AYE | C/Devine | - AYE |
| | C/Doyle | - AYE | C/Russell | - AYE |
| | S/Hundt | - AYE | | |

MOTION CARRIED 5 to 0.

RECREATION PLAN PROPOSAL PRESENTATION - JOHN RYAN

Supervisor Hundt reiterated the rationale for a Recreation Plan: the only way that the Town of Amenia can raise subdivision fees paid by developers is to have a comprehensive Recreation Plan in place. Money is included in the 2005 budget for this purpose.

John Ryan, landscape architect, then made a presentation that included the following points:

- One year ago he was asked to look into a Rec plan for the town.

- He visited four sites: Beekman Park, Wassaic Park, Webutuck School, and Allen Sand and Gravel.
- He was told that Amenia needed, among other things, soccer fields and a swimming site.

John Ryan's proposal will be comprised of three phases, each of which includes public comment with feedback incorporated into the following phases:

1. Information gathering - This would include getting a clear direction from the Town Board and studying town maps for wetlands, public lands, etc. with an emphasis on the sites already in use for recreation. This would be a type of inventory of existing recreation resources, including the Rail Trail and facilities available at Webutuck High School
2. Feasibility Study and construction plan.
3. Final Report.

John Ryan recommended that the scope of the project look at the entire town. He has shown the maps of Amenia to the NYS chief planner for parks who observed that Amenia's three most obvious assets are the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, our vegetated upland woodlands, and our water corridors. One goal would be to link the recreational components of the town.

Councilwoman Doyle mentioned that if Amenia gets this project listed in the NYS SCORP document, it will move us up the list for grant applications.

WETLAND DISCUSSION

John Ryan explained the DEC restrictions regarding wetland conversion. If wetland is converted for another usage (e.g. a ball field), then the town must create wetland in a different place that would be twice as large as the wetland destroyed. This is necessary because of the 50% failure rate when creating wetlands. In other words, if the town converted a 1-acre wetland into a ball field, then a separate 2-acre parcel must be turned into wetland. Peter Clair pointed out that the November 8, 2004 Enhancement Committee report stated that if the area converted from wetland were less than one acre, then the DEC restrictions could be avoided. The source of this information was Craig Vogel's presentation to the Enhancement Committee.

COMMUNITY SURVEY OF RECREATION NEEDS

Among the Town Board and the audience, there was much discussion and disagreement about a survey to determine recreation needs. Councilman Carroll commented that Recreation must be included in the town Master Plan and that we need a survey. Councilman Devine said that we don't need a survey to tell us that Beekman Park needs help and Wassaic Park is not used. He reminded everyone that the Master Plan included a survey 15 years ago and we should just use that; nothing has happened in town since then.

Supervisor Hundt asked John Ryan "How do you decide what a town wants?" John replied that he does a study or survey. Many suggestions were offered concerning a potential survey:

- 1 Bulk mailing;
- 2 Have Recreation Commission members pass the survey door-to-door;

- 3 Post survey on Channel 22 and website;
- 4 Phone survey;
- 5 Get Marist College to do it;
- 6 Get help with survey questions from Trust for Public Land;
- 7 Ask people how much they are willing to pay for a certain service, e.g. \$50 a year per household;
- 8 John Ryan has some sample surveys;
- 9 Do not include too many open-ended questions because they are hard to analyze.

After considerable discussion about the survey, Councilman Carroll moved to have the Recreation Commission do a survey on the recreation needs of the Town of Amenia.

HAVE RECREATION COMMISSION DO A SURVEY OF REC NEEDS

MOTION: C/Carroll

SECOND: C/Russell

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----|
| ROLL CALL: | C/Carroll | - AYE | C/Devine | - | NAY |
| | C/Doyle | - AYE | C/Russell | - AYE | |
| | S/Hundt | - AYE | | | |

MOTION CARRIED 4 to 1.

WEBUTUCK SCHOOL ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Varying opinions were expressed regarding the facilities at Webutuck School and how they relate to the Recreation Plan under discussion. Orpha Thomas mentioned that seniors like to swim but they will not use a pond. Webutuck School may be looking into building an indoor pool which would be much better. Councilman Carroll expressed concern about the inclusion of Webutuck School in Amenia's Recreation Plan. The school is located in the town of North East and Amenia may not want to put our tax dollars into another town. Peter Clair said that the school district is working on a Facilities Master Plan and he has received a draft copy from Dr. Johns.

Ken Pomeisl offered the following example of why we should look into Webutuck's facilities: Webutuck has a good track. Amenia would never consider building a track because it would duplicate that facility. In response to comments about the level of involvement with Webutuck School, John Ryan clarified that he would never do a plan for Webutuck School. He would merely inventory their facilities.

RECREATION PLAN SCOPE

The general tone of disagreement continued on the subject of the scope of the Recreation Plan. Councilman Russell voiced his opinion that if the initial information gathering phase did not include all resources, he would feel unjustified raising subdivision fees. Councilman Devine expressed his preference for a limited plan to focus on the two sites that are currently being used for recreation. From the audience, Betty Rooney noted that Dr. Johns was preparing a 20-year plan for Webutuck School District. "That is what Amenia needs and has never had; we need a future here."

Supervisor Hundt felt we should spend a little more money to look at the big picture. We don't want to make the same mistake as Webutuck School District did a few years ago when they refurbished Millerton Elementary School only to close it shortly afterwards.

After stating that it is the Town Board's responsibility to review the contract and set the clear scope for the project, Councilwoman Doyle moved that John Ryan include in his plan:

- a survey, working with the Recreation Commission;
- look at the town as a whole, existing resources and places of opportunity;
- prioritize about 4 projects;
- communicate to the Town Board in a public workshop.

RECREATION PLAN: ESTABLISH SCOPE, ETC.

MOTION: C/Doyle

SECOND: C/Russell

ROLL CALL: C/Carroll - NAY C/Devine - NAY

C/Doyle - AYE C/Russell - AYE

S/Hundt - AYE

MOTION CARRIED 3 to 2.

In casting his 'Nay' vote, Councilman Carroll clarified his belief that this is the job of the Recreation Commission that would report back to the Town Board. Councilwoman Doyle reiterated her position that it is the responsibility of the Town Board to review the contract and to give clear scope to the project.

RECREATION PLAN PROPOSAL / APPROVAL / CONTACT PERSON

Linda Gregory asked that the Recreation Plan include renderings or models so that we have something to sell to the public. After John Ryan said that models were expensive, it was requested that renderings (drawings) be included. John Ryan said that his proposal is not in a state to be voted on at this time.

There was some disagreement about who would approve the contract (proposal) with John Ryan. Councilwoman Doyle said that the Town Board approves the contract and sets the basic goals. Councilman Devine said that she was wrong. There was no further clarification about who had the responsibility to approve the contract. In response to the question from John Ryan: "who is my contact person?", Supervisor Hundt said that we would have to get back to him on that.

BUDGET PROCESS AND TOWN BOARD APPROVAL

Councilman Devine presented a brief "primer on town government". When the Town Board prepares a budget, money is put in place. If money is budgeted for a recreation plan, then the Recreation Commission should implement the goals of the Town Board. The Town Board has already approved everything in the budget, so no further approvals are needed.

RECREATION DIRECTOR, KEN POMEISL

Supervisor Hundt welcomed Ken Pomeisl as the new Recreation Director and questioned how he would interact with the new Recreation Commission. An argument then ensued between those who thought the Recreation Director should report to the Town Board and those who thought he should report to the Recreation Commission. Councilwoman Doyle said that the Town Board had hired the Recreation Director and that he reported to them. From the audience, Linda Gregory stated that the Recreation Commission needs to have Ken Pomeisl report to them. Ken Pomeisl expressed his view simply: "You hand somebody a check; they work for you." He went on to explain that if the Recreation Commission asked him

to do something he did not agree with, he would need to ask the Town Board.

RECREATION BUDGET

Ken Pomeisl stated that he feels responsible for the money in the recreation budget and asked who gets to spend it. What are the rules of the game? Councilman Devine explained how worksheets of budget requests form the foundation of the recreation budget. It is all done very systematically and logically. Councilwoman Doyle said the process is more complicated than that and there are a lot of different line items. It is not clear what goes into each line item, for example, the 'maintenance' line. Supervisor Hundt indicated that the Town Board needs to go over the budget with Ken Pomeisl. The potential confusion of the situation was demonstrated when Linda Gregory asked: "if Ken Pomeisl purchased lyme out of the Amenia Park Maintenance line, shouldn't the Rec Commission be involved?"

RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Supervisor Hundt asked the Recreation Commission to address the following items in their upcoming meeting:

- concession stand at ballfield;
- baseball registration money already collected; what happened to it?
- Little League and Lou Diversa charge. The town could be sued over this. Supervisory Hundt had asked Peter Clair to handle this situation; however, he was unable to contact Lou Diversa because the people in Dover had never heard of him (Diversa). Supervisor Hundt reiterate her request for Peter Clair to handle this.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn was voted for unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hermosilla,
Amenia Town Clerk